TAFT TALK

No. 65 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Dec 2013

Source: Antique Bottle & Glass Collector Aug 2013 p 10

Who Is Big Bill?

In a recent article in Antique Bottle & Glass Collector (Aug 2013 pp 10-12) which Roy Henry sent us, Bob Strickhart ponders the question of who the inspiration was for Big Bill.

Apparently Big Bill Best Bitters was sold between 1890 and 1910 and was a "Stomach or Magen Bitters containing harmless color and 21% alcohol by volume and were compounded with the extracts of the best herbs and roots known by the medical profession to be the most effective laxative remedy…"

In the article Strickhart presents two candidates; 1) Boss Tweed of New York political infamy but he states "he isn't really the kind of guy to name your product after: and 2) "John Bull", a caricature, who was "the personification of the English people", but "why name an American product after an English cartoon figure?"

He then presents another candidate: Pres. William Howard Taft, noting that most bottle collectors and research now point to that conclusion. As a logical model for "Big Bill" Strickhart notes the superior qualifications Taft had as a president and as a supreme court justice, but stresses that perhaps his other attributes might have contributed more directly to his nickname of "Big Bill" and thus his becoming a probable prominent figure in the antique bottle and glass world.

Strickhart of course mentions the large tub that the President apparently had installed in the White House that could "seat" four normal-size men, but he then notes that "Big Bill was so big that he couldn't even tie his own shoes." Strickhart presents two other illustrations. One apparently happened on his trip to

See Big Bill p 2

This has been a very difficult year for our Taft family. We have had some of our great stalwarts pass this year, and they will be sorely missed. Some names you will recognize, others worked with us behind the scenes; but all have contributed to our great history and sense of continuity.

We don't usually need to devote so much of the newsletter to In Memoriam notices, but these folks have been extraordinary people, both within their own communities and within the Taft Family Association. Please take some time to see how dedicated, resourceful, and entertaining our cousins have been and how much they all contributed in diverse and interesting ways, to their towns and cities.

Follansbee Family

Charles F. Davis, Jr. sent us his line of descent. One of our other members, Marilyn Thygeson, also researched the same line. Thanks to Marilyn's research efforts, we have added considerable information to Charles Davis' line. Unfortunately your editor has been unable to connect with Marilyn recently. It is questionable whether her gt-grandfather was a child of Clarissa Caroline Follansbee rather than Rebecca Cady. At any rate here is a short listing of information on this family (if this is your line, email me at patmarkallen@gmail.com for more information).

Clarissa (Israel, Jacob (not Israel), Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft was born 5 Mar 1786 in Northbridge, MA (VR 80) and died 3 Aug 1873 in Chicago, IL. She married 14 Apr 1805 Ebenezer Follansbee in Northbridge, MA (VR 158). Ebenezer Follansbee was born 14 Feb 1783 perhaps in Leicester or Newbury, MA and died 26 Mar 1872 in Chicago, IL, at the home of his son Charles.

Ebenezer Follensby / Follansby / Follansbee was listed on his gravestone as being born in Newbury, MA, but no birth record has been found. Other traditions mention Newburyport, MA. In his marriage certificate, recorded at the Northbridge Congregational Church, he was listed as residing in Leicester at that time. Ebenezer and his family moved to Watertown, NY about 1820 where he set up a blacksmith shop. In 1826 they sold part of their property to their son Charles but later moved with him to 1027 South Wabash St., Chicago, IL.

The children of Ebenezer and Clarissa (Taft) Follansbee were:

a. Clarissa Caroline Follansabee was born 22 Dec 1806 and died 27 May 1832 in Watertown, NY. She married 26 May 1826 James Farwell in Watertown, NY. Capt. James Farwell, son of Abel and Hannah (Russell) Farwell, was born 14 Dec 1784 in Groton, MA and died 14 Sep 1830 in Watertown, NY. Capt. Farwell married (1) say 1817 Rebecca Cady. Rebecca Cady, daughter of Robert and Eunice (Spaulding) Cady, was born 19 Nov 1793 in Windsor, VT and died abt 1825 in NY. The children by (1) are:
    1. James Leonard Farwell was born abt 1818 in Watertown, NY and died 10 Apr 1889 in Grant City, MO. He served as the second Governor of WI. Later in Washington, DC he was the principal examiner in the US Patent Office and was present at Ford's Theatre the day Pres. Lincoln was assassinated.
    (Note: Marilyn Thygeson says that her gt-grandfather Capt. James Farwell was orphaned at the age of 5 and died 14 Sep 1830 in Watertown and was apparently raised in the home of Charles and Sally Follansbee. It appears that James Leonard Farwell, who is I believe her grandfather, was actually the son of the first wife of Capt. Farwell. In her blog posts there is a "Mary" mentioned as though she might be a Follansbee.]
    2. Rebecca Farwell was born abt 1825 and died at an unknown date.
b. Augusta Follansbee was born 20 Aug 1808 and died 30 Nov 1841 in New Orleans, LA.
c. **Charles Taft Follansbee** (as he was listed in a bible in Marilyn's possession) was born 14 Oct 1810 in Paxton, MA and died 14 Jun 1887 in Chicago, IL. He married 5 Feb 1835 Sally Marion / Miriam Coburn. Sally Marion / Miriam Coburn, daughter of Hon. Merrill Coburn, was born 4 Jan 1818 in Felts Mills, NY and died 2 Dec 1900 probably in Chicago, IL. Children:
    1. Merrill Coburn Follansbee was born 22 Jul 1838 in Chicago, IL and died 16 May 1902 in Chicago, IL. He married abt 1873 Grace Darling Fowler. Grace Darling Fowler, was born 5 Nov 1851 in IL and died 28 Dec 1918 in Chicago, IL. Children: Charles Fowler Follansbee; Marion Follansbee; Unknown Follansbee; and Florence Follansbee.
    2. William Pitt Follansbee was born 29 Oct 1841 in Chicago, IL and 28 Feb 1876 in Chicago, IL.
    3. Charles Hansen / Alanson Follansbee was born 25 Jan 1845 in Chicago, IL and died 1 Jan 1851 in Chicago, IL.
    4. Eliza Follansbee was born and died 31 May 1845 in Chicago, IL.

(See Follansbee cont p 6)

In Memoriam

Seth Chase Taft

Seth Taft and his wife Franny have been enthusiastic participants in the Taft Family Association over the years: Christmas cards each year with fabulous pictures of family and trips, and most importantly for us visits to the 1984 and 1999 Reunions where Seth was our guest speaker enchanting us with his wit and sincerity.

Seth Taft, the son of Charles Phelps and Eleanor Kellogg (Chase) Taft, was born 31 Dec 1922 in Cincinnati, OH and died 14 Apr 2013 at his home in Pepper Ridge, OH. He was the son of Cincinnati Mayor Charlie Taft, the grandson of Pres. William Howard Taft, and the nephew of U.S. Senator Robert Taft.

After graduating from Yale Law School, he went to Cleveland in the late 1940s rather than settling in Cincinnati, where the family name adorned buildings and more. He spent his entire legal career of more than 40 years at Jones Day (then Jones Day, Reavis & Pogue.)

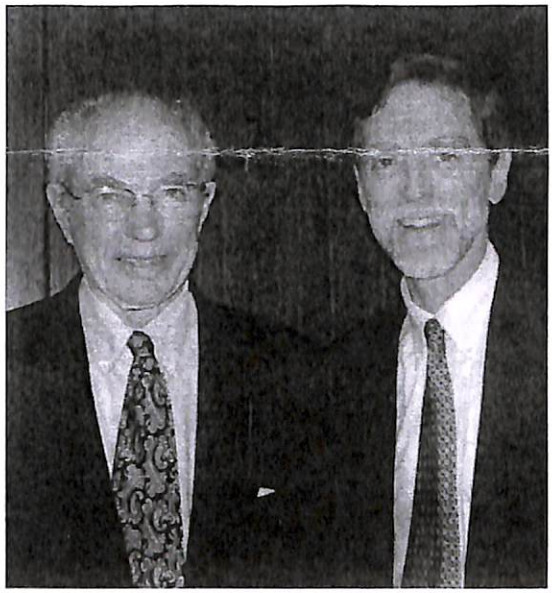
Taft may best be remembered locally for his narrow loss to Carl Stokes in the 1967 Cleveland mayor's race. In that race, Taft refused to resort to race-based politics during that election, fearing it would tear the city apart. Bob Bennett, who managed that campaign, called Taft, "One of the real decent people in politics. He had a God-given talent to help people. He thought the world could be a better place and that government could be better." Stokes and his family later praised Taft for his integrity and honesty. He also ran for Governor but was dubbed too "Liberal" of a Republican.

"In ways profound and enduring, Seth Taft was a man ahead of his time," said former Plain Dealer Editorial page editor Brent Larkin. Larkin was writing not only about the mayoral election but Taft's early efforts to push for regionalization of government services, something Taft believed would improve efficiency and reduce costs for municipalities. By the time voters approved a new charter reforming county government in 2009, Taft was already suffering from the effects of Alzheimer's disease. But Judy Rawson, former mayor of Shaker Heights, who contributed to the reform effort, called Taft "one of the fathers" of the reform movement.

Taft's son Rick, a Pepper Pike councilman who lives two doors from his parents, said his father managed to strike a "pretty extraordinary balance" between being a natural politician and family man. Rick Taft said his father left family members with scads of handcrafted wooden household items that he gave as Christmas gifts. He also did all of the interior carpentry on his home of 60 years.

In his later years, Taft learned to appreciate art and travel, going to Mexico more than a dozen times. "This was a wonderful, balanced life," Rick Taft said. *(source: Plain Dealer by Rachel Dissell 14 Apr 2013)*

Seth Taft, right, at a council meeting Source: Plain Dealer



Seth Taft with his son Rick. (source: Plain Dealer

Seth Taft leaves his wife Franny, four children: Frederick I. "Rick", Thomas P. "Tom", Cynthia B. "Cindy," and Seth T. "Tuck," their wifes and ten grandchildren.

Seth Chase Taft was the son of Eleanor Kellogg Chase and Charles Phelps (Pres. William Howard, Alphonso, Peter Rawson, Aaron, Peter, Joseph, Robert) Taft.

Evelyn L (Mead) Emerson Taft

Evelyn M (Eastlake) Taft

Clifford Albert "Cliff" Taft

Clifford Albert Taft was born 4 Feb 1929 in Fort Howard, NY, the son of Albert L. and Lillian May (Harder) Taft and died 28 Jun 2012 in Jefferson, OH. He married (1) Leona May Bennett and married (2) 25 Mar 1972 Doris Jeanette (High) Gammon who died 13 Apr 2013 in Ashtabula, OH.

Cliff was a veteran of both the US Army and the US Marine Corps and was a "Devil Dog" for life. He retired from RMI as the Captain of Plant Security. Known for his friendly, outgoing personality he was often so "busy talking while driving that he would miss turning into his drive, he never wanted the conversation to end."

Cliff Taft leaves three children: Gary (Crystal) Taft of AZ, Dr. Stephen (Cindy) Taft of IA, and Karen (James) Scott of Ashtabula; 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Clifford Albert was the son of Albert L., Henry Albert, Albert Henry, Hiram, Josiah, Timothy, Jacob, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft.

Doris Jeanette (High) Gammon Taft

Doris Jeanette (High) Gammon Taft was born 4 Mar 1933 in Akron, OH and died 13 Apr 2013 in Ashtabula, OH. She married (1) Donald Eugene Gammon and (2) Clifford Albert Taft. Doris served in the US Air Force after high school, and then was a ward clerk in the maternity section of Ashtabula County Medical Center. She also served as a volunteer paramedic/EMT in Jefferson.

Leona M (Bennett) Taft

In Memoriam

Donald E. Taft noted that "in just over a year we have lost 5 Tafts: Cliff Taft and his two wives, Donald's aunt and another Taft – that's a lot of Tafts especially for the village of Jefferson, OH. (population 3-4,000). Note that these wonderful folks are descended from either Robert and Matthew Taft. Donald did add two new members to the TFA so that is the good news. *(source: Star Beacon 2013)*

Evelyn L. (Mead) Emerson Taft

Evelyn L (Mead) Emerson Taft, aunt of Donald E. Taft, was born 25 Jun 1913 in Jefferson, OH and died 9 Jun 2013 in Saybrook Landing, OH. She married (2) 27 Feb 1936 William Howard Taft in Dorset, OH. She was a lifelong resident of Jefferson, OH and bowled in the senior league until she was 90. At age 94 she had her first motorcycle ride with her grandson: she had a smile when she left and a bigger smile when they returned. Her husband, William Howard Taft was the son of Loren Elmer (Clark Corbin, Adolphus, Timothy, Timothy, Jacob, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft.

Evelyn M. (Eastlake) Taft

Evelyn M (Eastlake) Taft was born 9 Mar 1926 in Andover, OH and died 2 Aug 2013 in Ashtabula, OH, formerly of Jefferson. She was the wife of Carl Rolland Taft. Evelyn worked as the cafeteria supervisor at Jefferson High School for over 30 years. She was an avid bowler, shuffleboard player and needlepointer. Carl Rolland was the son of Clair Jay (Franklin Benjamin "BF", Ira N., Ira, Ebenezer "Eben", James, Matthew Taft.

Evelyn Taft leaves her children: Cheryl (Willie) Meardith of FL; Roberta Young of VA; Linda (Robert) Langston of OH; Richard (Debra) of FL; Robert (Ann) of Jefferson, and Carla Sires of WA.

Doris J (High) Gammon Taft

Clifford Albert Taft

Leona May "Lee" (Bennett) Taft

Leona May "Lee" (Bennett) Taft was born 7 May 1930 in Glens Falls, NY and died 11 May 2013 in Ashtabula, OH. She was the first wife of Clifford Albert Taft. She worked as a Division Manager for the Lawson Milk Co. and as a manager for Rite Aid. Lee was a competitive bowler, avid golfer and enjoyed swimming.

Leona leaves three children: Gary (Crystal) Taft of AZ, Dr. Stephen (Cindy) Taft of IA, and Karen (James) Scott of Ashtabula; 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

In Memoriam

JUSTIN TAFT

Justin Taft (source: The State Journal-Register

We have just recently learned of the passing of one of our board members. Justin Taft came to our 2004 Reunion and in his inimitable style regaled us with his stories and volunteered to be on the TFA Board. He also brought copies of his recently published book "As I Saw It", which is full of stories about growing up in central Illinois. In 2007, he followed that with his second book, "The Tafts of Rochester, Illinois," in which he chronicled the history of his family and its migration from Vermont to Illinois.

Justin's family will remember his ready smile, his positive attitude about life and his readiness to always tell a story. Justin had many friends who will remember his kindnesses and his amazing ability to make new friends so quickly.

Justin Taft, son of Justin and Jennie Lynn (Craig) Taft, was born 29 Jan 1924 in Rochester, IL and died 14 Jun 2010 in Memorial Medical Center, Springfield, IL.

Justin was educated in the Rochester schools and pursued his college education at Springfield Junior College and the University of Illinois. Following college, he returned to the family farm that had been settled by his ancestors in the 1830s. He was named, "Outstanding Young Farmer of Sangamon County" in 1959.

Justin became involved in public service and was elected Rochester Township supervisor in 1959 and Sangamon County Probate Clerk in 1962. He served as a member of the Planning Board for Lincoln Land and was on its first board of trustees. In 1968, Justin Taft ran statewide for the position of clerk of the Illinois Supreme Court, on the Republican state ticket with U.S. Senator Everett M. Dirksen and Governor Richard B. Ogilvie. He won the election and was the last person elected by the voters to the position, seving for six years until 1975.

As a strong advocate for education, one of Justin's proudest achievements was being a founding member of the Lincoln Land Community College Board of Trustees. He was also elected to the Rochester School Board and served as its president.

Justin was a 4-H Club leader for many years, president of Sangamon County Rural Youth, and a long-serving member of the Sangamon County Fair Board. He served as chair of local United Fund drives, was a lifelong member of the Masonic order, served in a variety of positions at the Rochester Christian Church, and was a member of numerous other civic organizations. Justin served as president of the Rochester Historical Society and helped lead efforts to rebuild the Old Stone House in Rochester.

Justin is survived by his wife, Mardell, of Rochester; sister, Helen Shears of Springfield; daughters, Nancy (Dr. Larry) Semenza of Springfield and Carolyn (Allen) Grosboll of Petersburg; sons, George (partner, Patricia) of Bend, OR, Jim (Dani) of Rochester and Justin III (Vikki) of Springfield. He and Mardell also have eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. *(source: The State Journal-Register 17 Jun 2010)*

Justin Taft was the son of Jennie Lynn Craig and Justin (William Webb, William W., Josiah, Moses, Silas, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

Correction to TTT 64 p 8

Asa Delos and Rhobie (Seeley) Taft had seven children, not nine. Mildred C. and Evelyn Taft are descendants not children. We trust this has not hampered your research and apologize for the incorrect information.

FYI

If you have had my email bounce back, my apologies. As you may have guessed, the e-mail gremlins have attacked... and won.

The new email address for your editor is:
patmarkallen@gmail.com

5. Frank Henry Follansbee was born 6 Apr 1850 in Chicago, IL and died 5 Sep 1900 in Chicago, IL. He married 20 Nov 1883 Jennie Taft Darling in Boston, MA (VRMA 345.197). Jennie Taft Darling, daughter of Moses and Lucinda (Morse) Darling, was born 9 Jun 1861 in Boston, MA (VRMA 143.117) and died 8 Aug 1949 in Chicago, IL. Children: Frank Darling Follansbee; Charles Walter Follansbee; Oliver Taft Follansbee; and Russell Coburn Follansbee.
6. Charles Ebenezer Follansbee was born 24 Jun 1855 in Chicago, IL and died at an unknown date. He married in 1877 Marcia C. Coburn. Children: William M. Follansbee; Marguerite Jane Follansbee; Miriam C. Follansbee; Grace Darling Follansbee; Merrilll Middleton Follansbee; Mable Follansbee; and Marjorie Crary Follansbee
7. Marcia Clarissa / Coburn Follansbee was born 3 Aug 1859 in Chicago, IL and died 6 Aug 1860 in Chicago, IL.

d. William Pitt Follansbee was born 29 Oct 1811 and died 2 Feb 1870.
e. Alanson Follansbee was born 27 Jan 1812 and died 31 Mar 1869 in Milwaukee, WI. He married (1) abt 1842 Calista A. (--) . Calista A. (--) Taft was born abt 1816 in MA and died 22 Jun 1861 in Milwaukee, WI. He married (2) abt 1862 Jane "Jenney" Southergill. Jane "Jenney" Southergill was born abt 1835 and died in 1925 in Milwaukee, WI. Children by (1): George Alanson and Calista A. Follansbee; children by (2): Clarissa, Emily, and Mary "Minnie" Follansbee.
f. Edward A. Follansbee was born 27 Aug 1813 and died at an unknown date.
g. **Elivira Emily Follansbee** was born 5 Oct 1817 and died 17 Nov 1896 in Chicago, IL. She married between 1834 and 1838 Wakeman Johnson Pierce. Wakeman Johnson Pierce was born abt 11 Oct 1807 perhaps in Cornwall, CT and died at an unknown date. Children:

1. Caroline Clarissa Pierce was born 11 Apr 1839 in Utica, NY and died 22 Jun 1923 in Harbor Springs, MI. She married 1 May 1857 George Atwell Springer. George Atwell Springer, son of Moses and Susanne (Norcross) Springer, was born 15 May 1815 in Hallowell, ME and died 10 Feb 1899 in Chicago, IL. He married (1) Ann E. Gray who died in 1852 in Chicago, IL and they had five children including Frank G. Springer. He married (2) Nena Arvilla Green.

   Children with Caroline Clarissa (Pierce) Springer:
   a. George W. Springer (1858-1863)
   b. Ada Elvira Springer (1859-1934) married Albert Philpot.
   c. Charles Edward Springer (1863-1941) married Susan Rand.
   d. **Helen Augusta Springer** (1866-1931) married Simeon Loudenback. Their daughter **Gertrude Loudenback** married **Charles Freeman Davis**, and they were the parents of **Charles Freeman Davis**, our correspondent.
   e. Gertrude Lillian Springer (1868-1957).
   f. Cornelia Meeker Springer (1860-1943) married Frank Bradley.
   g. Edward Lancaster Springer (1872-?) married (1) Mary Morgan; m (2) Clara (McKilip) Goodrich.
   h. Paul Springer (1876-1962)
2. Charles Wakeman Pierce was born in 1842 in Utica, NY and died at an unknown date. He married 25 May 1870 Sarah Jane Taft in Northbridge, MA (VRMA 228.273). Sarah Jane Taft, daughter of Cyrus and Lucinda (Morse) Taft, was born 5 Oct 1843 in Northbridge, MA (VR 80) and died at an unknown date.
3. Emma Pierce was born abt 1844 and died at an unknown date. She married Henry Bicknell.
4. Flora Pierce was born 22 Feb 1852 and died 7 Feb 1926. She married Edward Slaughter.

h. Sally M. Follansbee was born in 1818 and died 2 Dec 1900.
i. Horatio Follansbee was born abt 1820 and died 31 Jul 1845.
j. Cornelia Follansbee
k. Emiily Percilla / Rosalia Follansbee was born 16 Jan 1823 and died 31 Jul 1883. She married abt 1848 Walter Newton Woodruff. They had two children: Charles Walter and Clairssa Calista Woodruff. They lived with Charles Taft Follansbee's family for about a year in 1857.

In Memoriam

Barbara Sue (Reisenauer) Smith

Barbara Sue (Reisenauer) Smith
source: La Cross Tribune

We were very saddened to learn of the passing of Sue – she had been communicating with your editor quite often and together we worked on a few of the Robert brother puzzles. It had been hoped that she might become one of our new board members, but unfortunately that hadn't happened.

Barbara Sue Reisenauer Smith, 80, the daughter of Albert H. and Irma Taft Reisenauer, died of lung cancer on 8 Jul 2013, at home in Hopkinsville, KY. Sue was born in Tomah, and attended the Tomah Public Schools, graduating as valedictorian of the class of 1950. She attended the (Methodist) Kahler Hospitals School of Nursing, in Rochester, MN and graduated in Sep 1953.

After moving to Denver in Jan 1954, she worked at Colorado General Hospital. That April, she married Air Force Sgt. Donald R. Smith at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, where he was stationed. From there, they moved to Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, SD. Following a brief period of civilian life, they re-entered the life of an Air Force family and were stationed in Madison, WI, where she worked at St. Mary's Hospital. When her husband received orders for Korea, Sue lived and worked in Tomah for that year.

After his return, the family moved several more times, living in Savannah, GA; twice in Fairfax, VA, for two Pentagon tours; and in Salina, KS during her husband's assignment to Vietnam. Sue and her family also relished a wonderful, four-year assignment at the American Embassy in Vienna, Austria. When her husband retired from the Air Force after 22 years, the Smiths moved to Hopkinsville, KY.

In Sue's later years, she had an active interest not only in travel but also in her genealogy. She traced her paternal and maternal lines back to the early 1600s, and compiled many volumes of information about both lines of descent.

To Sue and Don, who survives her, were born three children, Jeffrey Smith of Bowling Green, KY; Kimberly Smith, PhD, of Elgin/Austin, TX; and Erica Smith of Norfolk, VA. Other survivors include a sister, Irma Ann Reisenauer Seaberg of Osprey, FL; and several nieces, nephews and cousins. Sue's sister Mary Ellen Reisenauer Sagehorn, of Cassville, WI, predeceased her. *(source: La Cross Tribune 29 Jul 2013)*

Barbara Sue Reisenauer was the daughter of Albert Herbert Reisenauer and Irma Viola (George William, Samuel Essex, Robert, George, Robert, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft.

Big Bill (cont from p 1)

Russia as he was "getting out of his carriage to greet the Czar of Russia, Big Bill split his pants and was so embarrassed that he had to back out of the presence of the Czar to avoid exposing his backside." The second was "Big Bill was a great member of the Forty Winks Club. It is reported that … he would doze off just about anywhere and actually slept through a motorcade through New York City during a campaign. It wouldn't have been so bad but the car was open and the entire populace watched him pass by while completely asleep."

Strickhart finishes by stating that Pres. William H. Taft is probably the "Big Bill," but he will leave the final judgment up to the readers.

What do you think?

In Memoriam

Howard E. Brownson

"Howdy Brownson, song-leader, barbershopper, safety engineer, community volunteer and Cal alum extraordinaire, has sung his last tune."

Howard Elmer "Howdy" Brownson was born 17 May 1926 in Springfield, MA, the son of Arr Andrew and Grace (Gray) Brownson, and died 19 Apr 2013 in Alameda, CA.

A native of Springfield, MA, Howdy always said he grew up in Forest Park, where he was introduced, at the age of 10, to his lifelong love of bird-watching. At about the same time, he learned his Do-Re-Mi's at school and began his love of choral singing at the Methodist church. He graduated from Classical High School in 1944 and entered the V-12 officer training program at MIT. At the end of the war, Howdy moved to California to join his mother, a widow since 1942, who had found work as a foreman at the Kaiser shipyards.

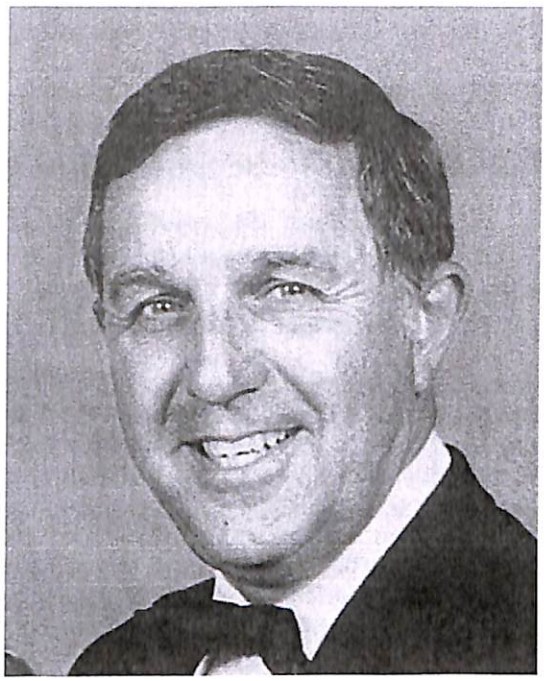
Howdy entered UC Berkeley in the fall of 1946 and changed his major from mechanical engineering to philosophy and psychology. More importantly, he joined the Cal Glee Club, where he met Mary Powell, his future bride, both graduating in 1948.

Howdy started his career at the State Compensation Insurance Fund. His first assignment was in Modesto but soon after Howdy opened the office in Redding. In 1961, transferred to the San Francisco office, he returned the family to Mary's home in Alameda, where he lived the rest of his life. He worked at State Fund for 27 years before moving on to become Contra Costa County's benefits officer, working there for 10 years. During these years he also taught safety engineering at junior colleges and Golden Gate University and served as president of the American Society of Safety Engineers.

While raising their four kids, Howdy and Mary hosted several foreign exchange students and visitors, and added foster daughter Juanita to the family. There was always room for one more.

Howdy sang in barbershop quartets, led choruses, including the Congregational Church choir in Redding; was active in scouts — as cubmaster in Redding and Alameda, then scoutmaster of Troop 1015 in Alameda. These were perfect venues for the many silly songs Howdy taught people during his long life. He also ventured into musical theater in the late 1960s and early '70s at Woodminster Amphitheater in the Oakland hills. He participated in more than 50 annual bird counts with the Audubon Society, and served on the Alameda Park and Recreation Commission, and other civic organizations.

In the mid- '70s, Howdy, again through singing, was asked to join the Bohemian Club. That started a whole new chapter of chorus and barbershop singing, directing, producing, camp managing and overall fun at the "Boho" Club.



Howard "Howdy" Brownson; source: Greer Family Mortuary

Starting in 1979 Howdy and Mary became world travelers, enjoying trips to all corners of the world or visiting their kids in Brazil and Germany. Howdy often made up funny words to songs to fete their hosts and tour leaders. He has probably led singing on every continent.

All along, Howdy and Mary have volunteered with the Cal Alumni Scholarship Committee, receiving the California Alumni Citation for their many hours of service for Bear Backers and the Alumni Association.

In retirement, Howdy also researched his genealogy, publishing hardbound editions for the family. He recently was working on the third edition. In his twilight years he started compiling a list of all the songs he had learned in the numerous singing groups he sang in throughout his life.

He is survived by his wife Mary, daughters Kris Carey and Nancy DeRoche (Dave), Juanita Matsuoka, son Don (Becky), daughter- in-law Kevis; grandchildren Amy Brownson, Molly Cormier (Matt), Dan and Sally Brownson, Kyleen Carey, Derek and Dominick DeRoche, Ellie and Tommy Brownson and great-granddaughter Donatella Donato. *(source: Greer Family Mortuary)*

Howard E. Brownson was the son of Arr Andrew Brownson and Grace Gray (Sylvester Samuel Gray , Samuel Gray & Aurilla May (Laban, Mijamin Mowry, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

In Memoriam

Elizabeth "Beth" Taft Klumb

Beth Klumb was a very helpful and enthusiastic correspondent with your editor over the years, and her insights will be missed.

Elizabeth "Beth" Taft Klumb was born 25 Aug 1938, in Mauston, daughter of William H. and Clara M. (Cunat) Taft. She graduated from Necedah High School in 1956 as salutatorian and went on to receive an associate degree in history from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, IL.

Beth was an active and contributing member to many organizations in the Wisconsin Rapids area including the Central Wisconsin Cultural Center, the Arts Council of South Wood County, Big Brother & Big Sisters of Central Wisconsin, and a member of the City Center Committee that sponsored the Downtown Grand Affair. In 2007 Beth received the Friend of the Arts award from the Central Wisconsin Cultural Center. Beth served eight years as the president of the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Endowment Fund (now the Advocates for Education) from its inception in 2001. In 2005 she received the Friends of Education award from the Board of Education of the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools for her assistance and involvement in establishing the WRPS Endowment Fund. Beth served eight years as the Local Coordinator for the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Band Association, annual state convention in Wisconsin Rapids. She also served as president of the Tri-City Community Concerts Association for eight years.

Beth served as the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and as the Board of Education secretary in the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District. She served with four superintendents during her tenure. Beth was a member of the Retired Educators Association in Wisconsin Rapids, and the WI Retired Educators Association. For the past 15 years she served on the Board of Directors for the Necedah High School Alumni Association. Beth served on the Board of Directors for the McMillan Memorial Library since 2007, and on the Ethics Committee for the City in 2004.

She was a member of the Heart of Wisconsin Genealogical Society (HOWGS), and the Ah Dah Wa Gam Chapter National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution or DAR.

Upon retirement, Beth tackled the daunting task of establishing the first-ever database of Alumni from Lincoln High School in Wisconsin Rapids, pouring through old school records. Two alumni directory books have been published since that time, one in 2003 and one in 2009.

Beth was a crusader for causes she believed in and gave generously of her time and talents in so many ways. Her hobbies included piano, music, reading, history, genealogy, and many trips to foreign countries.

Beth was a very kind and loving person. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Beth was preceded in death by her parents William and Clara Taft, and special friend David Billmeyer. She is survived by her daughter Kimberly Klumb of Green Bay, sister Lynn (Richard) Bennett of Wisconsin Rapids, WI and Brother Terry (Judy) Taft of Necedah, along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, and many beloved friends. She is further survived by her "forever friend" since age 3, Clara Berger. *(source: The Voice of Wisconsin Rapids 21 Jun 2013).*

Elizabeth "Beth" Taft was the daughter of Clara Marie Cunat and William Howard (George William, Samuel Essex, Robert, George, Robert, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft; and the cousin of Barbara Sue (Reisenauer) Smith (see p 70.

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested.

And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!

Taft Family Association Officers

President: still searching
Vice President & Genealogist: Neil B. Todd, 26 Walnut Place, Newtonville, MA 02460 neilbtodd@cs.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Allen, 77 Greenfield Rd. , Montague, MA 01351; patmarkallen@gmail.com
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Annual dues of $8 per family are due and payable each year on or before June.
(Your dues are paid through the year on your mailing label.)